THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

IV, No. 8 UNION COLLEGE : SCHENECTADY, N. Y. December, 1942

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PERIODICAL DEPT.

Humanities--Yes!

what have college English fed that they are so ? They boast of being the ns of a great cultural heri- t they guard it so jealously f their students know not it is. They complain that s come to them ill-prepared, y continue to ignore the reparation and immaturity nts and wonder why the are perplexed or dissatis- They continue to teach lit- story instead of literature, instead of ideas, charac- of a period instead of r and the eternal conflicts at play or novel, linguistics of language, meanings of Elisabethans rather than of and for today. They reat generalities and cover tances instead of guiding through a specific work. form prodigies of appreciа- the wonder of their classes, ect the classes to repeat the ance. They assume that whom they have not made will understand Browning. performance is too often nd fury signifying nothing, to the student. And yet ntinue to complain they are reciated, to bleat of their ine office, and to ignore ous needs and desires of the ajority of those who come them.

are these needs? Chiefly ractice under skilled direc- ith formulating experience to the accepted conven- current usage; simple r, organization, point, sim- and directness of phrase, the matters to emphasize, the multitude of petty re- s catalogued so convenient- the better handbooks. It not what a student writes it matters much that he ften about something, and good critic, not one who ardly as much as himself, no guide to teach **him.** If professors who know how will not teach composition, ould at least give time to e those who do. Here lies great reform. The second for the reverse skill of ting in their own mind, nder skilled direction, the experience of another. De- this skill is something al- English faculties attempt , although they well know . The final need, for the tation of literary forms and ties of a gifted writer, is the only one recognized, is the one least felt by stu- nd perhaps the least im-

English language is here to training in its use and

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Stop Press! Postponement!

CEA cheerfully accedes to our Government's request that no meetings take place at metropolitan centers during the holidays, thus reducing civilian use of trains and busses. The annual meeting is postponed, therefore, to Saturday, January 23, with a luncheon in place of a dinner. Our speakers are loyally co-operating, and additional writers and critics will join our panel discussion.

Out-of-town members planning an over-night stay will receive special consideration at the Edison if early reservations are made.

PROGRAM OF ANNUAL MEETING

Hotel Edison, New York City, January 23, 1943

General Topic for the Conference:
"College English in Peace and War"

10 A. M.

Chairman, John Abbott Clark, Michigan State College.
Panel discussion: The relative importance of classical and contemporary literature in the classroom.
Walter Pritchard Eaton, Yale University
Fred B. Millet, Wesleyan University
William Rose Benet
Dorothy Walworth, author of "Feast of Reason," etc. and others, representing teaching, authorship, criticism.
Atwood H. Townsend, New York University.

1:00 p.m. LUNCHEON.
Toastmaster, Burges Johnson
Address, President Howard Lowry
Address, Christopher Morley, "Accelerated English"
Address, John Erskine, "What Should Teachers of English Teach?"
After the luncheon all are invited to remain, to meet the guests and one another. Several of those authors whose writings are frequently included in classroom anthologies will be guests of the Association.

AFTERNOON MEETING

Address, Harry Warfel, "English Departments and Government Plans—a Report"
General Discussion
Business Session

All teachers of English, whether or not members of CEA, are invited to attend both meetings and the luncheon.

Luncheon tickets are $1.50 (no tips). Please send check in advance with request for reservations to Donald B. Clark, 301 School of Business Bldg., Columbia University, before December 25th.

Program Committee:
Chairman, Strang Lawson, Colgate Univ.; Scully Bradley, Univ. of Pennsylvania; Ernest E. Leisy, Southern Methodist Univ.; John Abbot Clark, Michigan State College; Atwood H. Townsend, New York Univ.

Local Committee:
Chairman, Mary A. Wyman, Hunter College; Donald L. Clark, Columbia Univ.; Margaret Bryant, Brooklyn College; Martin J. Freeman, Hunter College; Margaret Schlauch, New York Univ.; W. Cabell Greet, Columbia Univ.

Members are reminded of invitations from THE PLAYERS and from the NATIONAL ARTS CLUB, to enjoy the privileges of those famous institutions and visit their collections. See the CEA Secretary about guest cards.

Have We Kept the Faith ?

Brief extracts from address of President Norman Foerster, December 1941

The question, as stated, seems to imply that the national emergency has imposed a new obligation upon us, that a nation at war needs a kind of education different from that of a nation at peace. If this is the implication, I think it is false. As Aristotle remarked long ago, the best way to preserve a constitution is to adapt education to the form of government. He did not say that this is true during a time of war and not true during a time of peace. The democratic tradition is something that we should help preserve at all times. "In time of peace prepare for war." "In time of war prepare for peace." Education makes democracy strong in peace and makes it strong in war. It follows that if we teachers of English should now undertake to do something new and different, it is only because we should have done it long ago.

What should we have done long ago? Our teaching should have been dominated by that belief in man, in the dignity of individual man, which is the very essence of the democratic tradition. In that affirmation, democracy is strong in peace or war; without it, democracy is weak in peace or war. To make that affirmation with both light and leading is a task forever imposed upon us teachers of English by the very nature of our subject. As Mr. I. A. Richards said in the fine close of his paper which we recently published as a Chap Book, "We teachers of English have a great responsibility. We are the guardians of the main channel through which has come down to us whatever is high-hearted, courageous, noble, and passionate in its hopes for man, whatever is faithful, whatever is honorable, whatever is serious and sincere, whatever is most aware of man's nature and his fate, whatever is most ready to uphold and defend it."

To this Miltonic charge we can only reply that, as a group, we have not kept the faith, that, instead of defending this main channel, we ourselves were swept down another and sinister channel, the channel of relativism, of skepticism, of disillusionment, of cynicism.

During the twenty years between the two wars, we failed in our responsibility to resist the dark forces of decadence which led to the present crisis in civilization. On our own lips, the lips of the defenders of the humanities, fell that blight of which Mr. Richards speaks, when we used such words

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THE NEWS LETTER

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Membership in the College English Association, including THE NEWS LETTER, $2.00 a year. Subscription for Libraries, $1.50.

Editorial

"Wen you're a married man, Samivel, you'll understand a good many things as you don't understand now; but vether it's worth while goin' through so much to learn so little, as the charity-boy said ven he got to the end of the alphabet, is a matter o' taste."

The elder Weller was ahead of his time, for nearly a century has passed since he suggested that learning the alphabet might be a valueless bit of educational discipline. Only within the past few years have some of the schools been arriving at the same judgment.

Discipline as an element in our educational system has been out of vogue for some time among "progressive schools",—learning by rote, writing sentences twenty times on the board, or studying Latin because of the "disciplinary value" that comes from mastering regular rules of syntax and declension. Even in the colleges where the study of Latin lingers, its proponents mention discipline only in whispers.

In many colleges the discipline of required class attendance has given place to a system which allows the student to control the use of his own academic hours according to his best judgment; and the modification of the elective system and the establishment of a major study are justified on grounds other than disciplinary.

Now comes the war, and it invades the colleges. One armed service after another looks over our young men, selects the ones it desires and prescribes a program of study and a larger program of physical discipline. Or perhaps it snatches from our classrooms an indolent and pastey-faced youngster, who has been practising all the arts of evading responsibility and control for two or three years on the campus, and puts him into camp where he must get up in the morning and go to bed at night by rule, and eat according to prescribed patterns. He works when he is told and plays when he is told, and does an astonishing number of other things which his college teachers are certain lie entirely beyond his powers. Then he returns to the campus on a week's furlough, a changed young man,—erect, clear-eyed, direct-spoken, courteous, humorously recalling the wastrel that once he was, a long six months ago. If the war spares him, it is evident that he may come out of it not a fragment of academic flotsam, but a man.

What is this war going to teach us? Is any greater degree of educational discipline likely without the greater justification of war? We ask you.

At a time when teachers and laymen alike are attacking or defending the humanities in our educational program, especially as suitable studies for young men about to enter the armed services, this question should be asked oftener. If the Navy, the Air Corps and the Marines all are anxious to have their embryo officers stay in college up to the last possible moment, what do they hope that the college will provide? They insist that English be one of the courses studied, but surely they do not want it to duplicate subject-matter provided in officers' schools in the various army posts after the college classroom is a thing of the past. Strangely enough, they seem to have the notion that college provides something which the service schools cannot provide, and if there is a chance to get even a soupcon or a scintilla of the vague something, they will be the gainers.

Dear Editor:

The "What Can We Tell Them?" article in the "News Letter" for October, is one of the best statements for all of us to continue being finite about the infinite in the realm of art and literature. I have about given up in the matter of modern poetry, for there seem to be no touchstones and no place for sensibility. But then, I am not supposed to know anything beyond my literary periods, and a vague tolerance without critical effort is perhaps all that is demanded of me outside my spheres of inbuence.

How far one is justified in assuming that he has corraled truth and how far he is justified in struggling to impose it on anyone else will always be debatable, but the human mind cannot operate in perpetual motion; it has to arrive somewhere, and if it must move on from time to time to other positions, it ought to be able to judge from its travels which stopping places were best and which were worst.

The black cat the article speaks about never seems to be in any one cellar. As it says, the only way to know his presence is by feeling if he is there. Yet we always go on setting the trap for him, devising new machines which we hope will catch the absolute of beauty and art, truth and literature, and social justice in Government.

T. M. Pearce,
University of New Mexico

P. S.—The more I see of the "News Letter" the better I think the general pattern of it is. It can always add a page or two, as the material justifies, and one merit it has above all others: it insists on compact statement. I have found some very valuable ideas in it. It conevys trends among the groups in the profession. Something more ambitious might fall of its own weight. The "News Letter" gets along because not too much is expected of it, and it more than fulfills its purpose.

Dear Editor:

In case members are still interested, here are my experiences in the accelerated summer session: I taught the regular Freshman composition to students who for the most part would otherwise have entered college in the fall. These freshmen seemed to have an earnest interest in learning to write clearly and competently — even though all of them showed a very real awareness of the War and its effects on their normal lives. It was interesting to observe that virtually all of them, though they were enrolled for technical degrees and must have been deeply conscious of the fact that the supremely practical aspects of composition must be emphasized in times like the present, were eager to write with literary effectiveness. One student who failed—primarily because of faulty spelling, inconsistency in tenses, and common faults of grammar—said that he had written but one composition in four years of high school. Every so often, in spite of Scholastic Aptitude tests, such a student appears. The neglect revealed by some local school systems is little less than criminal at any time and especially so now.

Sincerely,
Cornell M. Dowlin,
Univ. of Pennsylvania

To the Editor:

If English instructors wish to contribute their bit to the war effort while doing their duty as teachers of literature, I suggest that they cease making the English classroom an academic junk yard piled high with erudition and historical data and turn to a more vital matter of linking poetry to life (if it is not so linked, what good is it?), now especially when life is seen in action on a grander scale than human history at any one time has ever witnessed.

For instance, let the teacher of our ordinary class of freshmen studying English narrative poetry discard the specimens available in publishers' anthologies and read Tennyson's **The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet.** Needless to say he will find the class meeting him halfway at least, full as their minds are of reports of our naval engagements off the Solomons. A study of narrative will then take on meaning.

Or, if the advanced class in Shakespeare has developed an attitude of more or less polite boredom to lectures on so-called "Sources," on date of composition, etc., etc., let the teacher forget his scholarship (also so called) and point out how an intelligent reading of **Othello** might have opened the eyes of many a college graduate who had taken a course in Shakespeare, to the working of the Japanese mind long before they were very painfully made aware of its diabolical Iago nature in action at Pearl Harbor. Study Shakespeare to see what he knows of life and one will get over the comfortable American feeling that all is well if we only are virtuous and mind our own business.

Scholarship is good for scholar and pupil alike only when it gets into the intellectual blood stream. Few are the lecture halls in American colleges and universities where such transfusion takes place.

John S. Harrison
Butler University

To the Editor:

I have just been examining the results of our A.C.E. English placement test for freshmen. According to the best statistical methods applied by professional statisticians—not by unscientific English instructors — thirty of these students made scores ranging from to 10 on the basis of the national median.

Such a low ranking would seem to indicate that these particular students would have little chance of passing a course in English composition. Yet the fact is that more than half of them are doing quite passable work in the weekly theme which is prepared under supervision during a two hour writing laboratory period. It is true that they have to put in a lot of work on the review of grammar to which our first term is necessarily in large measure restricted. It is true also that these first themes are comparatively simple accounts of personal experiences and thinking but such writing at least requires ability to put one's ideas in order and to follow the rules of orthography, punctuation, and other mechanics of writing.

These facts suggest the question whether English tests are at all indicative of a student's ability to do English. Is there some better way of determining who should go into sub-sections and who should be excused from the course than the method of testing bewildered and apprehensive students during orientation week? The A.C.E. test covers spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Can any of these be omitted as not significant? Should something else be added?

English teachers, who are not usually much acquainted with test and measurement procedures, are apt to be scornful of them. I wonder if any of your readers have had experiences similar to mine regarding the uncertain correlation between a student's test score and his ability to pass freshman English.

Robert J. Conklin,
Springfield College

The Humanities—Yes!

(Continued from Page 1)

in its literature bids fair to continue a part of our general education. Can C. E. A. do better than lead the fight for the new, literate generation? Here lies the great failure of public education in the past decade. And whose fault is it? Do we give students what they need? If we feel students come to us not well prepared, we should go to those who teach them and ask if anything can be done. If it cannot, we must regretfully begin where the student is. We must stop playing seminar with sophomores. We would do well to decide what we want of students, and exactly what we are trying to give them. How often do we deserve the sneer that English is only for dilletantes? We cannot teach literature to illiterates. And we cannot continue the ceremonial of facing students with largely meaningless jobs and retain their or our own respect. What are we going to do about it? If we act in character, nothing; but wait until it is done for us, as it will be. Had we not better lead than be driven? Had we not better put ourselves in a place where students say, "That is one course I got a lot out of," than in our present one where they say anthing but that? We may continue to teach our present sort of "upper class courses" for the same limited groups who now elect them. The big job is something else. And our recognition of it may come sooner than we think, upon orders from the Army and Navy. The Humanities — Yes! But literacy first. And then the Humanities as something more than a playground for scholarship. There lies the challenge. Will we meet it?

Robert T. Fitzhugh
Univ. of Maryland.

Training of Secondary School Teachers

Editor's note:

It is of special significance in that a committee representing the Department of English and the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University should collaborate to bring out review of the obligations and opportunities of all universities with respect to the training of secondary school teachers in English.

Harvard Accelerates Its Program of Teacher Education

The degree of Master of Arts in Teaching established at Harvard in 1936 has now been reorganized. Taking account of undergraduate studies in Education, the program now makes it fully possible for competent students from good colleges to attain the degree after one year of graduate study at Harvard. By a rearrangement of the material covered in fundamental courses in Education (Educational Psychology, Educational Measurement, Philosophy of Education, Secondary Education, and Principles of Teaching), this part of the program can be covered in twenty-four semester hours, or three-quarters of a full year of graduate work. The other quarter of the year will be devoted to advanced work in the subject to be taught. Students who have had good training in Education as undergraduates may devote more than a quarter of their graduate year to the study of their subject or a related field.

Undergraduates in Harvard College and Radcliffe College may now enter an integrated five-year program leading to the Bachelor's degree at the end of the fourth year and the A.M. in Teaching at the end of the fifth year. Decision to enter this program must be made at the close of the sophomore year. Nine semester hours in Education will be taken in the junior and senior years; sixteen semester hours in Education in the graduate year. Fields of concentration (majors) have been recognized in The Teaching of the Classics, English, Fine Arts, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, the Natural Sciences, or the Social Sciences.

These changes constitute a somewhat radical departure from the former Harvard program for the education of teachers. No change of principle or aim is involved, but the work has been brought together into a more coherent scheme and the degree has been made much more accessible. The program is still under the joint direction of the Faclty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Education. President James Bryant Conant is Chairman of the Administrative Board under which the work is conducted. Professor Henry W. Holmes, formerly Dean of the Graduate School of Education and now Chairman of the Committee on Educational Relations, is Secretary of the Board.

The Freshman's Reading Rate

For three years I have been trying to increase the reading rate of colege freshmen—along with comprehension, of course. I have been using the "Reader's Digest" measuring accomplishment by the Time Chart prepared by Miss Persons and Miss Center, Directors of the Reading Clinic, New York University. My students, reading for comprehension, fall so far below the median given in this chart that I should like to know what experience other teachers have had with the same material. The magazine seems to be widely used.

"The English Journal and other periodicals have repeatedly called attention to the poor ability of college students to get thought from the printed page. Mr. E. A. Cross, in The English Journal, March, 1941, says of high school graduates: "The ability to read—merely to understand what a writer has said, to get facts from a page of print—often and often is not there." Mr. Cross makes no mention of speed. The student who can reason about what he has read and draw a logical conclusion, says Mr. Cross, is so rare as to be a phenomenon to be wondered at. Mr. Lawrence H. Conrad, in "The English Journal," Jan. 1938, is equally emphatic. "Poor reading is the most serious handicap under which students work in the senior high school. All their learning is fogged by it, in all departments. . . . They misapprehend about half of what they read. The labor of teaching any subject, in the face of this defect, is very great."

I am wondering if the Time Chart given in the "Reader's Digst" is not too high, with a median of 400 words a minute. For my freshmen the chart is discouraging. When reading for comprehension — the only one in 30 can read 300 words a minute and make a reasonable report of the article. I am aware that here and there may be found a child prodigy, a "quiz kid", who can excel this; but our classes are not made up of prodigies. Nor are they stupids. Their lack of Latin is a serious handicap; they fail to get clear-cut meanings, and do not see that words having the same root may be grouped into families and be easily mastered. However, each student is required to have a dictionary, and we spend some class time once a week on vocabulary.

Perhaps teachers need an itinerant expert from the clinic to show them how greater skill can be attained.

A. L. Phillips,
Teachers College,
Mayville, North Dakota.

Sea-Change

"Poetry is extremely popular with all hands. It seems to afford the meaty relaxation that men demand under these circumstances, and even the toughest old seamen can be seen surreptitiously peeping at their 'Pocket Book of Verse'."

(From a letter by an officer on a U. S. destroyer, published recently in the New York Times.)

Full fathom five the bones of beauty lie,
And wait the sea-change in a secret place,—
Where hapless Lycid, for a little space,
Saw wonders, ere he mounted to the sky.
Among the branched corral, lest they die,
The seamen dwelling far by west emplace
A habitation for a giant race,
Touched by the keel of every argosy.

If this be false then say farewell to Death
Wel-slain; these victories are children's tales;
And armor us with closely-woven hate
Against the day when, with constricted breath,
We must at last creep forth like hooded snails,
Bearing on our backs our prison's weight.

Nathan Comfort Starr,
Rollins College.

Have We Kept the Faith?

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as "liberty", "justice", "honor", "nobility", "duty". For us as for others, these words had no vigor of life, no immediacy or urgency. In the routine of teaching we gave them no present reality but associated them with the dead past, explaining what they meant, historically, to Milton, or Wordsworth, or Emerson.

Under the pressure of events it is becoming clear to us that a man needs a firm center, as well as an expanding circumference. In democratic education we cannot crudely force a firm center into the student; he must form it for himself, he must exert his freedom to choose values. But he cannot choose what he does not know, and he will never know unless he is taught. Nor will it suffice to turn him over to the department of philosophy, or to the church, since the task in question is one shared by all the humanities, including literature. The power of great literature in forming a man's view of life needs no proof after all the testimony that has been offered through the ages. The business of the teacher of literature is to bring the student into vital contact with this power. By means of it, the old disparaged words in Mr. Richards' list—"liberty", "justice", "honor", "nobility", "duty" take on new meaning, blend into a picture of the good life made memorable and efficient in imaginative symbols.

What does this mean for us as teachers of English? First, it seems to me, that we should use every opportunity to support efforts, in our educational system, to restore a vital contact between students and the Classical and Christian traditions, and secondly, that we should emphasize, in our own teaching, the creative continuity of these basic traditions in English and American literature. In war and peace it is for us to share in the task of bringing home to the young generation the depth beneath depth which the democratic faith implies.

The Comic Spirit

The comic spirit is a weapon; it is the sword of Common Sense, with which the vigilant understanding protects itself from surprise attacks of the uncorrected heart. This priceless weapon has been won in the long struggle of humanity; it is the fruit and symbol of true culture. The mission of the Comic Spirit is to keep watch upon the shifty heart of man; to uncover the hiding places, where lurks the fox or snake, or where the primitive brute in us still survives, ever ready to lift a paw, naming his appetites his needs. . . . The Comic Spirit sees through the tricks and practices of rebellious hearts, and merrily goes the chase when he detects selfish or brutal egotism advancing, often with wary step or fluting voice or visage of lily flower.

Guy B. Petter

Propaganda For Democracy

Dear Mr. Editor—

I have small right to any of your space, being a teacher of English only in a highly restricted field, and to very few undergraduates. But recent communications in your "News Letter" have roused some of my worst instincts which always cause me to break out in print The idea of teaching boys and young men literature by feeding them a stream of democratic propaganda seems to me abhorrent. In the first place it would give them no understanding of or love for literature, and in the second place it would probably cause at least fifty per cent of them to loath the very word democracy for the rest of their lives. To spend a dreary year among the definitions of something the very essence of which to them is that it is personal and indefinable, and to be told that they are studying literature, is not a happy prospect. Since many of them are soon to do the dying, they would prefer to face death with a copy of Wordsworth in their pocket or a line of Keats in their memory, than with a packet of definitions. Since they are presumably fighting so that there may be another Keats and another Wordsworth, or an Eliot, or a Saroyan, or whatever style of mind they might prefer it is their primary right to be taught the best in the wide fields of literature, and to be aided in acquiring the taste and the critical judgments which will sufficiently enable any man to grasp a dream of human freedom. If it isn't your dream, or mine, or even Voltaire's what of it? That is what freedom means.

Shouldn't teachers of English be a little ashamed of being ashamed of being only teachers of English? Because the teachers of mathematics and physics and engineering are called "essential" to the war effort, must we feel we are non-essential because we try to give the young something to live by, besides ju jitsu and mechanics? Must we demand uniforms, no doubt with a semi-colon on the sleeve for insignia? We are keepers of the house no less now than ever, and an attempt to make the house over into a barracks, either under the pressure of college trustees or popular opinion or a sense of futility in ourselves, is a silly proceeding. I trust there is enough democracy lying around to permit me to say this without suffering assault.

Walter Prichard Eaton,
Dept. of Drama
Yale University,

—o—

On Growing Up With English

English is best approached with a large measure of indirectness. Language structure seems non-vital, even boresome, to most when considered only through the medium of the native grammar and rhetoric. Substantial reading has part of its rewards in improved language feeling, but does not of itself suffice for practical capability in the use of English. Propitious family speech environment is a splendid asset to impressionable spirits. But this too is not enough for advancement to real distinction in the language of the individual.

There is only one completely satisfactory general way of learning English, by **growing up with it**; and this means that Latin must be met, and in a reasonable degree assimilated. The modern foreign languages, having words of length and complexity which form contact with the longer-word element of English, could be studied intensively, and by the arousing of habits of thought on words through the processes of conscientious translation could help the student vastly in English word-knowledge at the all-important point where he is weak. (Oh, how weak!) They could theoretically be taught with as much emphasis on minutiae as is by compulsion of the subject accorded to Latin. But the modern languages have so many immediate and spectacular appeals that, in the time the college curriculum holds for them, it is impossible to use them in any large sense for purely linguistic conditioning of the unripe. Even if the time question did not enter, and even if all "educators" and professors of language agreed on aims, it would not be practicable to adjust a majority of linguistically unready student's minds to preoccupation with the reciprocity that should exist between the modern languages they study.

Training for language must be begun with vehemence in the lower schools; and proof is plentiful that in both immediate and ultimate results Latin there is a saver rather than a squanderer of time for those ambitious for competence in English. In this subject students find the stimulus that comes from the glamor of a stirring past, and are in the presence of the great intellects that had power to inspire the Renaissance. Latin is esteemed a **sine qua non** in many regions of the earth where general excellence in language prevails, and its knowledge enables cutivated foreigners to sound the depths of English more quickly and to better advantage than is the case with our own average citizen. It is favored, with perhaps no exceptions, by the body of our American graduate foreign language and English professors—whose unfortunate apathy, however, concerning fundamental language troubles in the wider reaches of our country is the very thing that makes possible, even occasions, an exposition of twice-told tales like this, the necessity of which is more or less of a shame to its author.

A. M. Withers,
Concord State Teachers College,
Athens, W. V.

Members are reminded (especially new members) that this paper gains in usefulness as it gains contributors. Send hints, inquiries, suggestions, however brief, for Jan. issue; or articles no longer than 1000 words.

Explicator

At last there has appeared a literary journal for teachers of literature which bears some relation to the teacher's job of teaching. **The Explicator** ("The last verse. . . . is not yet sufficiently explicated", Dryden) anounces that "Material concerned with genesis, parallelism, or biography will not be accepted unless it has direct bearing upon interpretation of the text. In general, contributions should be about literary works that are commonly read on the collegiate level."

Typical entries:

Q8. Sidney's ASTROPHEL AND STELLA. In sonnet I, the "brain child' motif (lines 12-14) is sufficiently clear, but I find the lines immediately preceding these difficult to visualize:

> But words come halting forth, wanting Invention's stay: Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows: And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.

Also, are the last six lines a single metaphor? Or has the poet two metaphors, connected by the idea of a child. R. U.

15. Masefield's CARGOES

In the plurality of its significance the poem is perhaps distinctive for its time and generation, of course excepting the work of Yeats. The significance extends in at least three directions: first, the objects themselves; second, the esthetic attitudes ("romantic" and "realistic"); third, the social attitudes. Though the third direction is closely associated with the second, it does not seem false to read into the poem the poet's recognition that all three ships and cargoes signify the same (sordid?) commercialism. That the poem is not completely satisfying is, we think, due to the fact that there is no apparent relevance between the cargoes in their cataloguing. If, as is commonly accepted, the poem as an exaltation of past splendor is not altogether without a defense. The Editors.

Besides its refreshing concern with reading literature for what it says instead of for what it gives the atecher a chance to say about the author, his period, and his sources, "The Explicator" offers frequent provocation to reread what one has long taken for granted or has left even longer unexplored. Vol I, No. 2 is now out, with issues promised "about the first of eacr month during the academic year." Address: Box 1247, College Station, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Subscription. one dollar per academic year.

R. T. F.

Our advertisers have been the "News Letter's" loyal friends throughout its experimental years. Mention it when you write them.

Invitations

The Players Club, founded by Edwin Booth and making a notable contribution to the artistic life of New York City and to the nation throughout the past fifty years, extends through the Secretary of the College English Association an invitation to men members of CEA who live outside the Metropolitan area and who may be especially interested in its library, its portraits, and its famous home to visit its clubhouse and to avail themselves of its club privileges during the days of our meeting. Any members who wish to take advantage of this invitation will please notify Burges Johnson promptly, so that the necessary guest cards may be sent.

—o—

The National Arts Club at 15 Gramercy Park makes a notable contribution to the art life of New York City by a series of exhibitions in its galleries. During the Christmas holidays it will offer to its members an exhibition of Indian-Chinese art. This exhibition is one in a series to promote amity and harmonic understanding through cultural appreciation and living contact. On Wednesday evenings programs will be offered in connection with the exhibition, with eminent speakers representing the expressive arts, and concluding with Indian and Chinese music and dancing.

Members of the College English Association attending our annual meeting are invited to visit the National Arts Club during the exhibition and to enjoy full privileges of the clubhouse. Members, both men and women, who may wish to take advantage of this invitation may secure guest cards by writing to our CEA Secretary.

The exhibition will open Dec. 16 and continue through Jan. 15.

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★

This is the first book on the science of semantics to be written for use in the regular freshman English courses. It is therefore simple and practical—directly applied to English as the ordinary person uses it. There are many exercises to test the student's grasp of what he has read and to give him practice in applying semantic principles.

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World Literature For Today

Seldom presented to English classes, but guaranteed to interest and stimulate students today, are these perennially fresh masterpieces for college reading in either literature or composition classes in war-time America, listed chronologically:

1. Pericles' ***Funeral Oration*** as reported by Thucydides in his ***History***, Book II. (Find each phrase or idea of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address expanded by Pericles. Compare with Webster's Bunker Hill Monument Creations. Compose a speech for May 30 or Nov. 11 at Arlington National Cemetery.)

2. Plutarch's life of Pericles, in his ***Parallel Lives of Great Greeks and Romans***. (Compare the problems of democratic Athens with those of the U. S. now. What is statesmanship?)

3. Virgil's ***Aeneid***, Book II. (Contrast ancient and contemporary methods of taking cities.)

4. Marcus Aurelius' ***Meditations***. (Compare his ethics with Christian teachings useful in government and private life today.)

5. Medieval hymns and songs, as St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun, the ***Dies Irae*** (translated posthumously by Swinburne, as well as by many others but not presented in Sir Walter Scott's fragment), the ***Te Deum Laudamus*** and other church hymns, the ***Gaudeamus Igitur***.

6. A miracle play, or the Passion Play, preferably as performed at Nancy, France or at Oberammergau, unless the instructor can make a translation of Arnoul Greban's charming dramatic poem of 1452, as revived in 1935 in front of Notre Dame in Paris. (Make a popular dramatization of the life of a great hero.)

7. Leonardo Da Vinci's ***Notebooks***. (Compare with the Maxime of La Rochefoucauld, or La Bruyere, or Vauvenargues, or Pascal's ***Thoughts***, or Samuel Butler's ***Notebooks***).

8. Machiavelli's ***The Prince***, especially chapters 8, 15-21. (How have contemporary dictators profited from Renaissance methods?)

9. Hugo Grotius' ***The Law of War and Peace***, especially Book I, chap. I; Book II, chap. XXIII; Book III, chap. I, and the introduction in the definitive English edition published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1925. (What international law functions today?)

10. Descartes' ***Discourse on Method***, especially the account of his education in Part I, and Part II. Accessible in the Harvard Classics and elsewhere. (Write such a survey of the student's intellectual life. How far is his method the scientific method?)

11. Comenius' ***The Great Didactic***, especially chapters 27-31. (What should be the organization, the aims, the methods of education at various levels? How has his idea of the digest developed today?)

12. Pascal's ***Thoughts***, especially on "the wager." (Why not believe in God? Or, research on his comptometer and contributions to science or to mathematics.)

13. Voltaire's Correspondence, especially his letters on the press, the theatre, his public services, and to his friends; easily accessible in ***Voltaire in His Letters***, translated by S. G. Tallentyre (New York, Putnam's, 1919). (Compare with his nearest rivals in the epistolary art, as Mme. de Sevigne, Lady Mary Montagu, Walpole, Swift.)

14. Rousseau's ***The Social Contract***. (Condense this as for the ***Reader's Digest***. Contrast with the totalitarian ideals.)

15. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, formulated in 1789 by the Constituent Assembly of France. It is found in the ***Larousse***, and with the Constitutions of 1791 and 1793 and fascinating original sources in E. L. Higgins' ***The French Revolution as told by Contemporaries*** (Houghton, Mifflin, 1938). (Compare with the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Declaration of Independence of 1776, and with the American Bill of Rights ratified in 1791, and with the Atlantic Charter of 1941.)

16. Adam Mickiewicz' ***Pan Tadeusz***, the epic of Poland, translated in the Everyman Series (Dutton, 1917), especially Books I-IV, XII. (What is nationalism in literature? Its function?)

17. Nicolay Gogol's ***The Inspector General***. (Compare Gogol with Moliere. Use Gogol's method to satirize the sins of municipal administration today.)

18. Giuseppe Mazzini's ***The Duties of Man***, especially chapters IV, IX-XII. These Addresses to Workingmen, written in 1844 and 1858, are a necessary and logical antidote to Marr and Engels' ***The Communist Manifesto***. (Compare Kant's categorical imperative. Imagine Mazzini's reaction to neutrality and isolationism in democratic nations from 1933 to their entrances into the war; to the Munich Settlement; to the German treatment of their nationals and neighbors.)

19. Joseph Conrad's ***Lord Jim*** and ***Youth***. (What is courage?)

20. Emile Verhaeren's ***Belgium's Agony***. (Houghton, Mifflin, 1915) (Trace similarities and differences in these two last wars.)

21. Winston Churchill's speeches, especially those of the present war, as his Address before the Congress of the United States on Dec. 26, 1941.

Navy Reading

English teachers who find in their classes today many young men already accepted by the Navy as promising officer material, may be glad to have the following comment from a staff officer as to the reading tastes of Navy men, and as to those books which most frequently find their way into the travelling kit of a sailor:

"Although it is difficult to find a least common denominator in reading tastes, and the Department naturally is reluctant to endorse specific books, perhaps I may make a few suggestions within the framework of these limitations.

Several surveys have established the fact that the Bible is favorite reading for men in all services. Among naval personnel, there is a very great interest in books that deal with "shop" matters. To be listed among the standard works in this field are any of the various histories of the United States Navy, and also the works of Mahan, which, although sometimes formidable, possess a charm for many Navy men. Worthy of mention also, perhaps, are several excellent biographies of naval heroes, which run from Nelson to Sims, as well as books on the traditions and lore of the service.

Considering works of more general interest, I should commend to you several authors specializing in historical romance and adventure. Books of this type apear to be universally popular. For example, the writings of Alexander Dumas, Herman Melville, and Joseph Conrad may be cited. Tolstoy, too, is enjoying a renascence of popularity—especially for his **War and Peace**—and I do not believe he is too "highbrow" to be included.

Sincerely yours,
Leland P. Lovette,
Captain, U. S. Navy,
Director of Public Relations

Teacher–English

A pamphlet entitled "Criteria for Teacher Education", issued by the "Committee on Teacher Education" of the "Association of Colleges and Universities of the State of New York" begins with this "Standard to be Applied as a Basis for Approval of Programs of Teacher Education".

"An adequate understanding of young people of school age; of the nature of the physical and emotional develpment of youth through the years of formal schooling; of the way the minds of the young work and their interests and motives shift and maturate during the critical adolescent years".

On page 6 under (C) appears another standard to be applied: "(1) A comprehensive acquaintance with the cultural heritage and the vast body of established knowledge which needs to be mediated to the young if they are to function effectively in the variant activities of their own generation".

Is it necessary for the minds of the young to maturate? Could they not simply mature? Is it necessary to mediate knowledge to the young? Might it not be taught or conveyed. What is the difference between varied and variant activities?

When state committees and others in authority are addressing words of guidance or counsel to teachers, would it not be well to use language customarily employed by normal folk of good speech habits? Is there not a danger that teachers may become so accustomed to teacher-English that they will use it when they ought to be using the common or garden variety?

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Your Allotment of Reading

"There are in the United States approximately one hundred million people over fifteen years of age. Being a literate people, they read, but how much? How much do they have to read? How much is there for them to read? The answers to these questions have never been obtained and probably never will, but that hasn't prevented us from doing some figuring. The things that are available for them to read which are currently produced are newspapers, magazines, and books. By means of the World Almanac, our lightning calculator has estimated that 21,562,240,000 of these were published in 1940. Most of these were newspapers, many of them magazines, and a few of them were books. This 21,562,240,000 figure represents the number of composite newspapers, magazines, and books that were actually issued, counting one for each copy of a book, for each copy of each issue of a newspaper, and for each copy of each number of a magazine. Consequently, if a monthly magazine had a circulation of 100,000, we represented that magazine with a figure of 1,200,000.

Prorating all of these printed materials among the one hundred million Americans over fifteen years of age, we find that each person has published for him each year 215 newspapers, magazines, and books. If each person read all of his share, it would take him a very long time. What the average number of words in the average paper-magazine-book might be is anyone's guess. Ours is one hundred thousand. Now an average person probably does not read at the rate of more than two hundred and fifty words a minute. At this rate he could read fifteen thousand words an hour, and it would take him something more than six hours to read each one of these average pieces of reading matter. But give him credit for being able to read one hundred thousand words in five hours, and what do we have? We have every single person over fifteen in the United States reading 2.9 hours a day if each piece of reading matter that each person hypothetically receives is read from beginning to end. We have found few persons willing to admit that the average American reads more than an hour a day. (Most people refuse to admit that there is such a thing as an average American. The economic man has recently vanished like the buffalo and the Indian, and maybe the average American will be next, though we hope not.) If the average American reads only an hour a day, it means that only one third of that which is printed and published is read. And all of these figures, it should be emphasized, do not take into consideration at all any of the books published last year or the year before or the year before that, and millions and millions of them are in circulation in libraries all over the country, and millions more fill book shelves in millions of homes. We are now talking about just the current literary production of the country. Whether or not you do your share of reading, we don't know, but if in the course of a year you get newspapers, magazines, and books to the extent of 215 for each member of your family above fifteen, then you are.

All of this seemed rather absurd to us at first and probably does to you, too, at this point; but consider how it breaks down. If you as an individual got your share of these newspapers, magazines, and books, this is what you would get; one daily morning newspaper every six days, or once a week; one daily evening newspaper twice a week; a Sunday newspaper every third week; a tri-weekly newspaper every third year; a bi-weekly newspaper once a year; a weekly newspaper every sixth week; a so-called daily magazine every two months; a tri-weekly magazine every twenty-five years; a bi-weekly magazine every twenty-six weeks; a weekly magazine every fortnight; a semi-weekly magazine each year. Monthly magazines are the only ones that show up to your advantage; you would get one every third week. And quarterlies you would get once a year. Every five years you would get another magazine of the classification called miscellaneous. Now we come to books. Every six months you would get one book. This is the nearest estimate we have ever seen to what the average American's literary consumption should or could be. These figures, you may say, are not fair; and we certainly don't claim that they are very accurate; but this is the sort of thing they do with bathtubs and toothbrushes; and we don't see why we can't do it with our industry, which is part and parcel, though we must say a very small parcel, of the reading matter industry of the United States of America.'

—from "The Pleasures of Publishing."
Columbia Univ. Press.

Dear Editor:

Reading Vernon E. Lichenstein's comments on "The Humanities In Time of Crisis," in the "News Letter" for November, called to mind a very delightful address given by Dr. Alan Gregg as The Linsly R. Williams Memorial Lecture.

The title of Dr. Gregg's address is "Humanism and Science," and since it impresses me as being so unusual, I shall assume that other readers who would enjoy it have not run across it. It is found in "The March of Medicine," the New York Academy of Medicine Lectures to the Laity for 1941, and may be secured from the Columbia University Press for $2.

Dr. Gregg measures the shortcomings of the present medical group against the background of the Humanities and one curious suggestion, howbeit very true, is that the medical profession might learn to express itself in simple language!

C. T. Ryan,
State Teachers College
Kearney, Nebraska.

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